

A NEW METAPONE FROM THE MICRONESIAN ISLANDS (HYMENOPTERA, FORMICIDÆ)

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Among the numerous Micronesian ants sent me for study by the Pacific Science Board, there is a new species of *Metapone* from Moen Island, Truk, which is described below. So far as I am aware, it is the first species of the genus to be recorded from the Micronesian Islands, although all the other previously described species are from the Oriental and Australian faunal realms. Since Truk was highly fortified by the Japanese before the Second World War, there must have been a great amount of imports then and it is quite likely that this new species may have been introduced. Certainly, one must be cautious in accepting the form as strictly indigenous. The 12 previously described species are *bakeri* Whlr. (1916) and *gracilis* Whlr. (1935), the Philippines; *greeni* Forel (1911) the genotype, and *johni* Karawajew (1933), Ceylon; *hewitti* Whlr. (1919), Borneo; *jacobsoni* Craw. (1924), Sumatra; *sauteri* Forel (1912), Formosa; *krombeini* M. R. Sm. (1947), New Guinea; *lea* Whlr. (1919), *mjæbergi* Forel, (1915), *tillyardi* Whlr. (1919) and *tricolor* MacAreavey (1949) Australia.

These very interesting and highly aberrant ants undoubtedly belong to the subfamily Myrmicinae, but their exact phylogenetic status and relationships have not yet been determined. The ants are believed to nest in small colonies within the cavities of plants and to feed on termites.

Metapone truki new species

WORKER.—Length 5 mm.

Head subrectangular, 1.5 times as long as broad (measured from the anterior border of the clypeal lobe to the posterior border of the head, and across the greatest width of the head), with anteriorly converging sides and emarginate posterior border. Width approximately 0.7 mm. at the insertion of the mandibles. Clypeus extended forward as a prominent, sub-

rectangular lobe, the anterior border of which is transversely truncated and the anterolateral angles sharply defined. Distance from the fronto-clypeal suture to the anterior border of the clypeal lobe (measured through its greatest length) approximately 0.5 mm. Frontal area lacking. Fronto-clypeal suture present but not clearly defined in all lights. Mandible inwardly curved, the dorsal and ventral borders somewhat subparallel, the masticatory margin oblique and bearing 2 well-defined apical teeth and 3 or 4 smaller and less regular basal teeth. Antenna 11-segmented, with a prominent 3-segmented club; all funicular segments except the last clearly broader than long and with a flattened appearance, the last funicular segment longer than the combined lengths of the 2 preceding segments. Eye with 7 or 8 ommatidia in its greatest width and about 6 in its shortest width. Ocelli and ocellar pits absent.

Thorax, in profile, subrectangular, with flattened, weakly arched (anteroposteriorly) dorsum. Prosternum on each side projecting ventrally as a rather wide but bluntly angular process. Thorax, from above, measured through its greatest length (from the anterior border of the pronotal collar to the posterior border of the epinotum) 1.7 mm., narrowest at the posterior border of the epinotum where it measures scarcely over 0.3 mm. Thorax submarginate, with prominent but somewhat rounded humeri. Promesonotal suture lacking, mesoepinotal suture represented by a distinct dark line, which is approximately 1 mm. from the anterior border of the pronotal collar and approximately 0.7 mm. from the posterior border of the epinotum.

Legs short, the femora greatly expanded, especially the femora of the hind legs. Each tibia with a spur, that of the anterior tibia the largest. Apices of the tibiae and metatarsi toothed. In profile, anterior surface of the petiolar node concave, the dorsal surface convex, the node bearing a distinct posterolateral tooth; ventral surface of the petiole with a prominent tooth, which is followed after a short space by a slight angle much smaller than the tooth. Ventral surface of postpetiole with 2 distinct, tooth-like convexities. Petiolar node, from above, distinctly longer than broad, measured through its greatest length and breadth it is approximately 0.43 mm. by 0.35 mm., narrowest anteriorly and widening posteriorly, and forming on each side an acute, well-defined posterolateral tooth; anterior border of the node truncate, the posterior border concave, and the sides straight or very weakly concave. Postpetiolar node, from above, somewhat subrectangular in appearance but in reality with the sides diverging posteriorly, approximately 1.3 times as broad as long.

Gaster, from above, oblong-triangular, broadest at the base and acute at the apex, with the first segment approximately twice the length of the postpetiolar node.

Mandible finely and longitudinally striated. Cheeks and antennal scrobes coarsely, longitudinally striated. Dorsal surface of head and thorax very distinctly striated longitudinally, the former also bearing coarse, scattered,

hair-bearing punctures. Dorsal surface of petiolar and postpetiolar nodes smooth but with scattered hair-bearing punctures. Sides of thorax (excluding the epinotum) rather finely, obliquely striated, sides of postpetiolar node largely punctulate.

Pubescence most apparent on the gaster, where it is composed of sparse, rather closely appressed, yellowish hairs. Pilosity fairly abundant on body and consisting of yellowish hairs of variable length, which are mostly erect; those near the apex of the gaster unusually long. Under surface of the head also with erect hairs.

Type locality.—Truk: North Basin of Mount Chukumong, Moen, 2-10-49, R. W. L. Potts, from rotten breadfruit.

Described from a holotype and two paratype workers. The holotype has been deposited in the United States National Museum under U.S.N.M. No. 61855. A single paratype each has been placed in the California Academy of Sciences and the Bishop Museum. The paratypes are very similar to the holotype, differing mainly in their slightly smaller size, 4.3 and 4.5 mm. respectively.

In W. M. Wheeler's article entitled *The Ants of the Genus Metapone* Forel (1919, *Ann. Ent. Soc. Amer.* 12: 173-191, 7 figs.), specimens would key down to couplet 4 because of the projecting, subrectangular clypeal lobe, which is transversely truncated in front and with sharply defined anterolateral angles, and also because of the shape of the petiole, which is distinctly longer than broad and with the posterior corners produced as distinct teeth rather than as blunt lobes. Couplet 4 contains two species, *lea* of Australia and *sauteri* of Formosa. The worker of *truiki* differs from that of *lea* in its less flattened body, different mandibular dentition, less developed clypeal lobe, larger eyes, different shaped epinotum, more expanded hind femora, and numerous other characters. Since *sauteri* is known only from the female type, it is difficult to compare the worker of *truiki* with that caste; *truiki*, however, differs from *sauteri* in not having the petiole and postpetiole striated, in lacking the lobe at the base of the mandible, and in the different configuration of the ventral side of the petiole and postpetiole.